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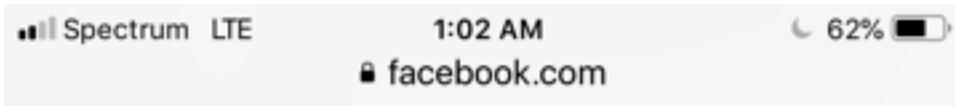
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Levi Walls - I have written the following st...

Levi Walls July 27 at 10:09 PM · ...

I have written the following statement in an attempt to share my experiences and shed light on the situation regarding the Journal of Schenkerian Studies. Furthermore, the purpose of this statement is to emphasize how deeply sorry I am for my involvement in the journal. Although I had no control over the content of the journal, or over the decisions regarding review processes, I am guilty of complicity because I remained in the position after I realized that my whistleblowing efforts were for naught. I hope the following account provides helpful context:

In summer 2019 (when I had just finished my first year as a PhD student in music theory at UNT) I was asked if I would like to take on a research assistantship, as assistant editor of the JSS. It would allow me to gain skills in typesetting, copyediting, and general understanding of the process that goes into an academic journal. I saw the assistantship as a good opportunity, as I am interested in research. And, naturally, as the position was under the supervision of no less than five UNT faculty members who I believed had my best academic interest at heart, it didn't seem like something I would regret. Throughout the process, myself and the editor at the time were to report directly to Timothy Jackson and Stephen Slottow, with major decisions about the journal's contents to be decided by them. As I will explain, what appeared to be a positive opportunity for a young graduate student quickly turned into an extremely shameful position that I feared I could not leave without significant damage to my career.



For the first few months, the job seemed fine, as I got to work with three articles on various topics, typesetting and offering clarity-related edits. However, after Philip Ewell's SMT presentation, Timothy Jackson decided that it was the responsibility of the journal to "protect Schenkerian analysis." Although—after serious thought—I essentially agreed with Ewell's talk, it was not up to me what did or did not go into the journal. After seeing some of the responses, I started to become incredibly worried. I gave comments to one author, including that they seemed to devalue other fields of study, that they cherrypicked information to make Schenker appear in a better light, and that they confused cultural appropriation with egalitarianism. Shortly after, I was told by Timothy Jackson (my superior in at least three senses: a tenured faculty member who ran the journal and also served as my academic advisor) that it was not my job to censor people. After this, things continued to go in a direction that I found to be disgusting.

I set up a secret meeting with my department chair, specifically acknowledging that I was coming to him as a whistleblower because I was worried about the potential dangers that the journal posed for the College of Music and for rational discourse in music theory. My warning was not heeded and—although I feel that he had the best of intentions—he expressed reluctance to step in and control the actions of the journal. Furthermore, after my warning that Dr. Jackson was woefully ignorant about politically correct discourse and race relations, he rebutted that "Dr. Jackson did very well in the recent diversity and inclusion workshops."

After this, I feared that I would remain powerless and voiceless in regard to the running of the journal (despite my misleading title of "assistant editor," and the fact that I was meant to become "editor" for volume 13). In hindsight, I should have quit the journal in protest. However, I feared retaliation from Timothy Jackson: he is an incredibly well-connected and influential figure in Schenkerian circles, and

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After this, I feared that I would remain powerless and voiceless in regard to the running of the journal (despite my misleading title of "assistant editor," and the fact that I was meant to become "editor" for volume 13). In hindsight, I should have quit the journal in protest. However, I feared retaliation from Timothy Jackson: he is an incredibly well-connected and influential figure in Schenkerian circles, and I've lost count of the number of people who have told me over the years that I would regret it if I ever got on his bad side. Despite this—as well as my worry about losing the financial means to support my family—I am ashamed to say that I stayed in the position. I continued to do the administrative tasks assigned to me, to typeset the articles, provide basic copyediting, and to correspond with authors about their edits via email. Eventually, I read Timothy Jackson's response, which left me dumbfounded by its disgusting and harmful rhetoric. Even after that, I feared to do anything other than grin and bear a job that I knew was harmful to UNT, the field of music theory, people of color, and basic human decency. For that cowardice, I am truly sorry.

Sincerely,

Levi Walls

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David Falterman

Levi, thank you for this courageous and vulnerable statement. Rest assured, you have